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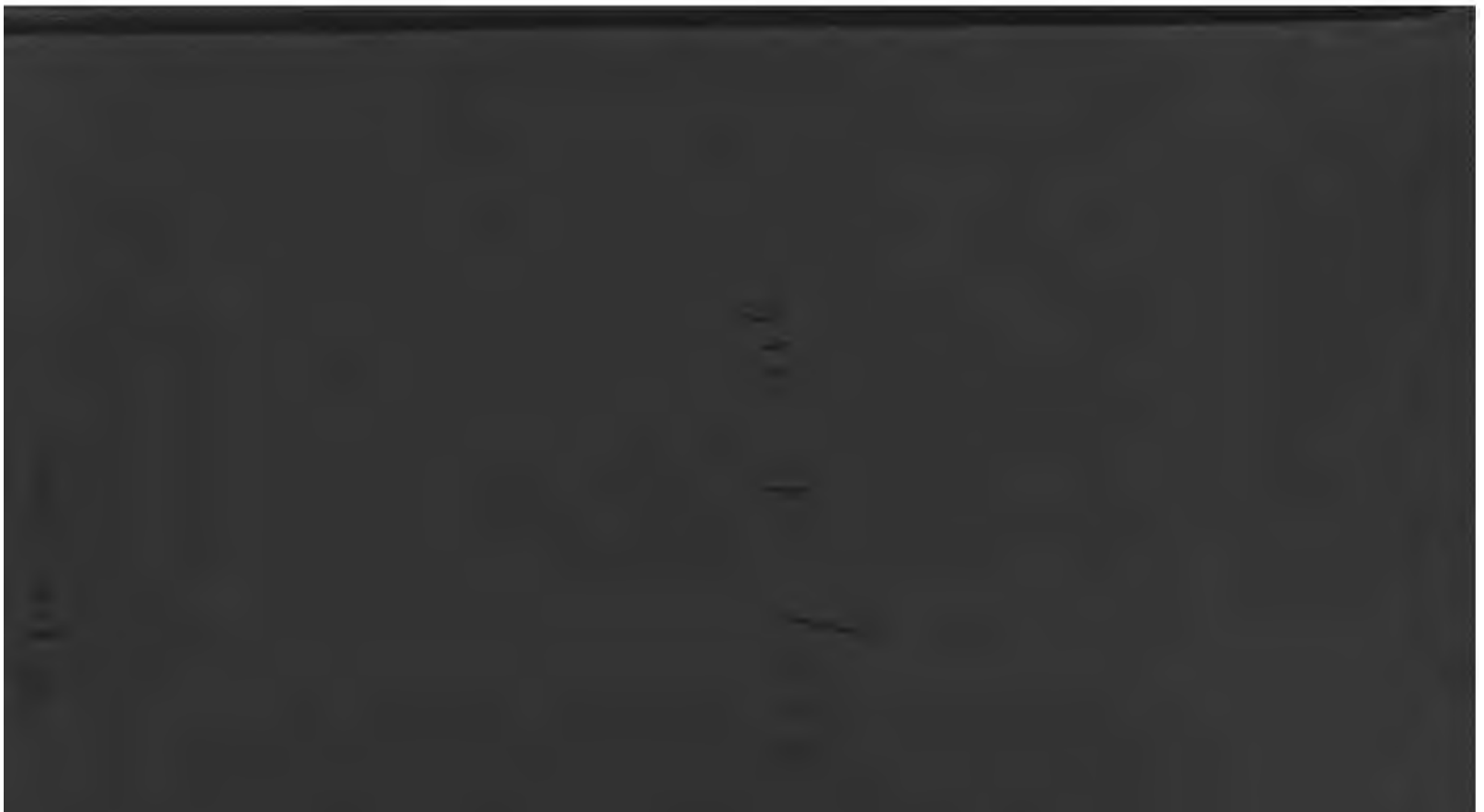
NOTES
FROM
MINTO MANUSCRIPTS



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NOTES

FROM

MINTO MANUSCRIPTS

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NOTES FROM MINTO MSS.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE correspondence of my grandfather may be divided into two portions: the first collected from the Minto MSS., containing letters addressed to his family, by himself or by others, on matters affecting him; of these letters none are earlier in date than 1762, none later than 1776: the second portion composed of several volumes of letters, private and official, written to my grandfather by various persons between 1772 and 1785. These were all in his own keeping at the time of his death, and were sent to Minto a few years ago by my mother, along with some other MSS. of a later date, which had also belonged to him.

The letters bound in volumes have been generally collected under three heads:—Family Letters; Foreign Miscellaneous Letters; English Miscella-

neous Letters. There are, however, two or three volumes entirely occupied by the correspondence of particular friends, as Mr. Liston, Sir James and Lady Harris, and others; and there are volumes of official correspondence with the Office and with his colleagues at foreign Courts; among whom were Lord Stormont,[1] Sir R. Keith,[2] and Messrs. De Vismes,[3] Wroughton,[4] Morton Eden, and Osborn.

All these were collected in their present form before the French occupation of Dresden in 1796, and were at that time, in consequence of my grandfather's sudden departure, thrown into a cellar of the house he had occupied, along with other property belonging to him. There they remained for upwards of thirty years, during more than twenty of which he believed them to be lost; for it was not till after the Peace that he received information, by means of a letter which reached him in India, of his having had good friends at Dresden, who, having saved his property from falling into the hands of the French, were now desirous to restore it to him. As it comprised plate, pictures, china, and other things far more valuable *as plunder* than manuscripts, he was as much surprised as pleased

[1] Minister at Vienna and Paris.
[2] Vienna.
[3] Stockholm.
[4] Warsaw.

by the communication; nevertheless, with his habitual carelessness, he took no steps to recover his losses till some years later, when, in 1826, he was prevailed on to let my uncle Frederick, who was then a mere lad, proceed to Dresden in quest of the long-lost property. There, accordingly, in a cellar, perfectly intact and uninjured, were found some of the most valuable contents of the *ci-devant Hôtel du Ministre Britannique*, which in the moment of flight had been abandoned to their fate.

The only paper which my grandfather had been anxious to recover, was a private memorandum in Mr. Pitt's handwriting, containing instructions for his guidance, and this, on regaining it, he sent to the Foreign Office.

The mixture of order and disorder in the arrangement of these papers is extraordinary. It might be supposed that some one, acting on a suggestion that all the letters should be classified under specified heads, had thrown the contents of desks and drawers into so many several heaps, and had then, without further selection, proceeded to bind them together. Along with letters from royalties, generals, and statesmen, are found the most trivial notes. Letters of introduction to insignificant persons are preserved as carefully as those from

Mirabeau, Romantzow, and Nelson. More than a third of these bulky volumes might be burnt without loss, and yet enough would remain to give a finished picture of the society in which my grandfather spent his youth.

The letters of 1775 and 1776 are so numerous and so abundant in personal details, that one feels on intimate terms with the writers and the correspondents.

Strange that it should be so! that, after so long a silence, the dead should speak again,—should be restored to our knowledge in all the freshness of their youth, introducing us to sorrows which they themselves long outlived, and to sentiments forgotten sooner still. But if these thoughts be startling to us, what would *their* feelings have been could they have foreseen that the follies of the moment were to be handed down to generations unborn? What would the flirting *dame de cour* have said could she have guessed that the indolent Englishman, who rarely troubled himself to answer her notes, would preserve them for the amusement of his descendants? And what would have been felt by the mother and sisters, who believed themselves to possess all his confidence, had they been told that to us would be given the clue

they never found, to the thoughts and affections of one of those dearest to them? That Minto—that generation—has long since passed away, and we, now sojourning here, wonder whether they in their day knew as much of each other as we know of them. Truly, even in this world, all hearts are laid open, all secrets made known; even here, a day of judgment is for ever going on!

NINA MINTO.

MINTO, *March* 1861.

CHAPTER I.

1762 TO 1779.

HUGH'S EDUCATION—EXPEDITION TO POLAND AND THE DANUBIAN PROVINCES—MISSION TO MUNICH—RECALL TO ENGLAND.

You have asked me to put on paper the leading facts which I have gathered from my grandfather's correspondence concerning his early life, and I am the more willing to do so, because I know by experience how much the letters gain in interest by being read with some previous knowledge of the circumstances under which they were written, and of the events to which they relate.

With the laudable desire to begin at the beginning, I should gladly trace the manner in which my grandfather's earliest years were spent, but unfortunately I have no means of doing so; the oldest letter in my possession is of the date of 1762, when he was eight years old, and was living with his family at Twickenham; and in none of the subsequent letters have I found any internal evidence as to the locality which they looked upon as home. In none is there any allusion to favourite haunts, to

gardens or games, to dependants or pets; nothing to show affection for home as a place. Strong family affection has been ever a characteristic of the race, and to be together was at all times an object of tenderest longing, but where the meeting should take place seems to have been a matter of indifference.

From this I am led to suppose, that during the youth of the family, their parents had led an unsettled life, probably dividing their time between Parliamentary duties in London, and visits to relations in Edinburgh, occasionally living at Lochgelly, and occasionally at Minto. It is possible, too, that the home life may not have been of the kind to make itself remembered with unmixed pleasure. Sir Gilbert[1] was a grave, highly cultivated man, immersed in politics, and like all fathers of his time, he seems to have inspired his family with as much awe as admiration.

Lady Elliot,[2] clever, high-spirited, and imaginative, was not, like one who filled her place in after years,

> "Blessed with a temper, whose unclouded ray
> Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day."

Her preference for those of her children who most resembled herself was openly avowed, and in Isabella

[1] Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto, third Baronet, M.P., a Lord of the Admiralty, distinguished by his literary tastes as well as his political abilities.

[2] Agnes Murray Kynynmound, heiress of Melgund in Forfar, and of Lochgelly and Kynynmound in Fifeshire. She was habitually addressed as Lady Elliot Murray.

and Hugh, she cultivated rather than repressed the uncontrolled sensibility, the romantic impulsiveness of character, and "high imaginings," which, in the case of the sister, probably increased constitutional tendencies to the extent of rendering them morbid, and which in that of the brother, diminished the successfulness of his career, and the happiness of his life. Her eldest son Gilbert,[1] and her youngest daughter Eleanor, were not supposed by her to be of the porcelain clay of which the rest were made, and her allusions, soon after Hugh left her, to Gilbert's coldness of manner, as compared with Hugh's more demonstrative nature, is not less striking, when we find that she lived to give her entire confidence to her eldest son, and to be on terms approaching to estrangement with the younger.

To a want therefore of home sunshine, it is possible that we may in part ascribe the fact, that the letters written from home deal chiefly with news, with politics, or with advice, while those addressed there by the absent sons, are confined to matters affecting their studies and pursuits.

From their earliest years the boys were training for the world.

"Life," says Byron, "has no Present," but child-

[1] The absence of Alick in India, and the youth of Bob, prevented them from playing an equal part with the others in the family drama.

hood is a time of life which should form an exception to the rule, a time when stores of mental as of bodily health may be laid up in days of careless enjoyment.

At ten years old, Hugh was with his elder brother
1764. in Paris, learning French and *l'usage du monde* under the auspices of David Hume.

The circumstances of the family probably had much to do with the eagerness with which the boys were prepared to enter on the arena where honours were to be won. Poor, proud of their position, which was the fruit of ability, the parents strove to fit the sons to keep what themselves had gained. Gilbert, writing to his mother from Edinburgh, in reply to a letter of congratulation on a successful display in the Rhetorical Society, deprecates her being too much elated by his success; though, he says, he well knows the importance of obtaining the power of public speaking.

I am, however, anticipating events; so, to proceed with my story in order. In 1762, Mr. Liston[1] was engaged to be their tutor, and during that and the following year his pupils appear to have lived at Twickenham, and to have prosecuted the ordinary studies of their age under his superintendence. Towards the end of 1764 they went to Paris, where

[1] Robert Liston, Esq., of New Liston, near Edinburgh, afterwards Sir R. Liston, and minister at Madrid, etc.; his salary as tutor was £25 a year, bed, board, and washing.

they remained two years. They were specially commended to the charge of Mr. Hume, who showed them great civility, and while at a *pension* near Paris they formed the acquaintance of Mirabeau, then a boy of their own age in the same school. In one of Gilbert's letters to his father, he particularly mentions that Mirabeau had gained some distinction by his delivery of a discourse in favour of mathematics.

In 1766 they returned to their own country, and were sent to continue their studies in Edinburgh, under the superintendence of Professor George Stuart. In those days, as at present, the education given in Edinburgh was of a multiform description. Both brothers studied natural and moral philosophy, mathematics, classics, chemistry, rhetoric, drawing, fencing, and dancing; to these studies Gilbert added that of civil law, so that their week-day time was thoroughly well filled, and Sundays found them glad to enjoy the recreation of a quiet dinner party with their grandmamma[1] and aunts,[2] who lived in Edinburgh.

After a slight illness of Hugh's in 1766, Mr.

[1] Helen Stuart (Dowager Lady Elliot) was daughter of Sir Robert Stuart of Allanbank, Bart. Berwickshire, and widow of Lord Minto, Justice-Clerk.

[2] One of these, Miss Jane Elliot, was the authoress of the much admired ballad, "The Flowers of the Forest."

Stuart writes as follows to Sir Gilbert:—"Hugh's popularity is such that since he has been allowed to see any one his *levée* has been crowded." In the same letter he says, "Gilbert is pleased with himself; he does nothing for show." In the spring of
1767. the following year, after describing the order of their studies, Mr. Stuart writes:—"In everything where Hugh's age admits, he is really wonderful." Two months later, he says, "Your two young men are going on well in their studies, and are superior to most of their companions. I never had occasion to see two brothers so contrasted, and indeed I should find it a more difficult task to manage Hugh, were it not for the example of his brother. He is lively, agreeable, and popular. No wonder if his vivacity is now and then above his reason. As it is, he needs a very sharp eye;" and then follows an amusing account of some excesses into which poor Hugh had been led by the injudicious hospitalities of some of his friends. "Hugh has great honesty and candour," he writes on another occasion; "if his quickness and vivacity hurry him away, it will not be for want of taste and penetration."

Dr. Somerville, writing to Lady Elliot in January 1768, mentions a circumstance which confirms the above account of Hugh's readiness:—"I attended

them one evening to their Society (the Rhetorical); few of the young orators happened to be prepared upon the question of the night, and the debate was like to have come soon to a stand, when Mr. Hugh stood up with great spirit, and, to good purpose, spoke for some minutes in reply to what had been thrown out before. It gave surprise to every person present, and I never before had reason to think so highly of his abilities. If his appearance had not been superior to what might have been expected from many who are justly enough esteemed promising young men, I should not have said one word about it."[1]

In 1768, Gilbert and Hugh went to Oxford; but during this period I find scarcely any trace of Hugh. Soon after his arrival he wrote a letter to his father, from which the following extract will suffice to show the manners and customs of Oxford nearly a century ago:—

"My dear Father,—We are now beginning to be a little settled to our business and situation, and I hope we may go on very well. As yet I have seen nothing which may interrupt us, for although most of the young people here are much idler than I could

Nov. 11, 1768.

[1] For a further account of Hugh Elliot at this period, see Dr. Somerville's "Life and Times," p. 125.

have conceived, yet as there are so many of them in the same way, and they have always enough to join in any idle scheme, they never trouble their heads about anybody else but those who are present.

"This, I think, is the ordinary way the noblemen and gentlemen commoners spend their day: get up at eight and go to prayers; breakfast at nine, and some hour in the forenoon read some Greek or Latin with their tutor; the rest of the forenoon is given up either to tennis, riding, shooting, but for the most part to lounging; dine at one; after dinner, they invite one another to each other's rooms, and sit there mostly till between three and four, then they go home and read another hour or two, and spend the evening between the coffee-house, cards, and the billiard table, till supper-time, when they sup at each other's rooms, where they stay, mostly, till twelve or one o'clock. . . . I daresay some spend the day to much better purpose.

"The tutor we met with seems to be a very good kind of man, and a good classical scholar, but I cannot find out that he has any other knowledge, at least not to any degree of perfection (I include history in the classics). We have just been dining with Dr. Markham, and I do not know anybody that he has had twice in his house in so short a time. He

asked us what part of learning we were most deficient in. My brother told him that we knew little Greek, but that we found ourselves equal to most young men of our age in Latin, and that we had applied ourselves particularly to *mathématiques*, and had got the rudiments of most of the sciences. He answered that, to be sure, *mathématiques*, and those kind of things, were very necessary for a gentleman, but that it was only classical and historical knowledge that make able statesmen, and then he went on to recommend the study of Greek. As, however, you intend me for the army, I should think it very improper in me to give my time to it, as long as I have any of what he calls 'those kind of things' to learn. He also recommended the natural philosophy, as some of its branches were very necessary for an officer to learn, especially hydrostatics. In short, I think he endeavoured to recommend everything which is taught here, and dis-recommend everything which is not taught here. As for myself, this is the plan which I have laid down:—If I am to read law, six to eight, law; eight, prayers, which we all attend; sup and breakfast, nine to ten; we go to our tutors, ten to eleven; law again; eleven to one, history; one to two, dine; two to three, when I can get the dancing-master,

who is very good, and who I shall soon have; draw, three to four; natural philosophy, four to five; after five, *conique* sections; the astronomy, by all accounts, is nothing; at half-past five, I will go to the coffee-house,—everybody goes there.

"We are told we must take great care never to speak upon politics, or prefer any other University to this.

"Frederick Stewart had given himself the airs of despising everything that was English, and speaking of everything that was Scotch, and had offended my uncle by speaking in the coffee-house of his father's intrigue with the Princess of Wales. . . .

"Pray, Papa, if anybody asks you how we like Oxford, don't tell them that we find fault with anything, for I never saw people so bigoted to any place in my life, and they are jealous of the least thing that can be construed against it."

Paris, July 1770.

In 1770, we again find both brothers at Paris. An amusing letter from Hugh describes some of the first visits they paid on their arrival:—"As soon as we were equipped we waited on Mr. Walpole, who seems to be as dry and cold a kind of gentleman as ever I saw. He cleared up a little when he heard that we had some French acquaintance, and did not depend entirely upon him for

introductions. His behaviour was not particular to us in this respect, but is the same to all the young English; and indeed, I think he is so far in the right, as it would be impossible to take any charge of such a parcel of raw ignorant boys as most of them seem to be." In the same letter, the whole of which is amusing, he describes a visit to Madame de Boufflers,[1] "who was at her studies in her bed-chamber. She received us very kindly, and spoke about all our Scotch and English authors; if she had time, she would set about translating Mr. Smith's Moral Sentiments,—'Il a des idées si justes de la sympathie.' This book is now in great vogue here; this doctrine of sympathy bids fair for cutting out David Hume's Immaterialism, especially with the ladies, ever since they heard of his marriage."

Gilbert, writing in French, describes, with some particularity, the society of Madame Geoffrin,[2] and dwells on the trouble it gave her to "gouverner ses savans." The coterie of Madame Geoffrin was

[1] Marquise de Boufflers, frequently mentioned in Walpole's *Correspondence* as *l'Idole du Temple*. Her reputation for gallantry and for pedantry seems to have been equally well sustained.

[2] Madame Geoffrin was celebrated in her day as a *bel-esprit*, and the patroness of literary men, the most eminent among whom met frequently at her house. Montesquieu, the *Encyclopédistes* L'Abbé Delille and La Harpe, were among her most intimate friends.—See article on Madame Geoffrin, *Bibliothèque Portative*.

divided into two sets, which met alternately at her house on Mondays and Wednesdays, and disastrous would have been the fate of him who, by intention or mischance, should have presented himself before her on the wrong day. "Si les deux venaient par hasard à se rencontrer, elle dit que sa maison serait jetée par les fenêtres!" Gilbert gave the preference to the Wednesday meetings, on account of the presence of Mademoiselle L'Espinasse.[1] Madame du Deffand's society they described as "plus élevé que le Parnasse de Madame Geoffrin," and it was, as we know from Walpole, composed of all that was eminent in France, either by intellect or position.[2]

Gilbert writes at this time with some brotherly pride of Hugh's popularity with men and women, but a more impartial testimony to the merits of both brothers will be found in Madame du Deffand's published correspondence with Horace Walpole:[3]— "Nous avons ici les enfants de M. Elliot. Ils sont infiniment aimables. Ils savent parfaitement le français, ils sont gais, doux et polis, et plaisent à

[1] The *ci-devant* companion of Madame du Deffand, the *chère amie* of D'Alembert, and authoress of some celebrated letters.

[2] From Madame Riccoboni, another celebrated literary lady, and the authoress of several works, there are two or three letters in this collection written to my grandfather at Munich.

[3] Vol. ii. p. 81.

tout le monde. Je les vois souvent, j'ai pour eux toutes les attentions possibles, mais ils n'ont besoin de personne pour les faire valoir, on leur trouve une fort jolie figure."

In the autumn of 1770, Gilbert returned to Christ Church, and Hugh proceeded to Metz, where he proposed to study military science, and especially fortification, a camp being at that time held there for the instruction of the Duke de Chartres; and Madame de Boufflers and others gave him introductions to the officers in command. He seems to have been struck by the absence of courtesy on the part of the French officers to their English guests: "The Swiss and German are, however, all the more civil to us on that account, for they are on ill terms with the French." From Metz, Hugh went to Strasburgh, and thence returned to England. What became of him during the following year I do not discover; but it was in the course of 1771, and when he was under the age of eighteen, that he met with a disappointment which rankled in his mind through life. Having received, when still in his early childhood, the promise of a commission of captaincy in the Guards, an honour which procured him the notoriety of an allusion in No. 45 of the *North Briton*, he now learnt that Lord

Metz, 1770.

Strasburgh.

Barrington refused to ratify the appointment, on the ground that such commissions, passing over inferior grades of rank, could only be given to princes of the blood-royal. The *rank* of captain, however, appears to have been granted him for the purpose, as we learn from one of his father's letters, of enabling him to enter a foreign army with certain advantages.[1]

The blow to Hugh must have been severe. All the military ardour which had been fostered by his supposed destination in life, was at once blighted, and at that time his love for the profession of arms is described as "a passion." He did not, however, at once forego his hope of gratifying it; but, with the consent of his family, he set out for Vienna, in the spring of 1772, with letters of introduction to Lord Stormont, and General Prince Poniatowski, and General Langlais. It is impossible to read this episode in my grandfather's life, given with all the details of unreserved family correspondence, without remarking the change—it must be admitted for the better—which has taken place since those days, both in the manner of granting and of receiving appointments in the public service.

[1] At that time no officer of the Austrian army holding a rank inferior to that of Captain was received in Viennese society.

Publicity has depressed patronage, and has made it necessary that young men should have such claims to preferment as will bear the investigation of the envious or the less fortunate; and the disappointed candidate hardly wonders while he grumbles at the discovery that, for every vacant appointment, there are found "five hundred good as he." In 1772, the refusal to ratify such an appointment as that claimed by my grandfather, was looked on as the most cutting insult, the cruellest injury: foes were supposed to triumph over so great a disgrace; friends could not do enough to wipe out so crying an injustice.

A short stay at Vienna sufficed to show there was little or no chance of obtaining the desired admission *with rank* into the Austrian army, but the time spent there was not without results, as it gained for Hugh the cordial friendship of Lord Stormont, the British Minister at Vienna, who remained his fast and useful friend.[1] From that period too, dates his correspondence with Countess Thun, one of the most agreeable and cultivated women in Viennese society, of whom Wraxall,[2] in his *Memoirs of the Court of*

[1] Hugh was presented to the Emperor Joseph while at Vienna, and his father, in one of his letters, congratulates him on an opportunity of seeing that "remarkable young sovereign."

[2] Wraxall's *Memoirs*, vol. ii.

Berlin, etc., thus writes: "No capital in Europe can produce persons more distinguished by natural and acquired endowments, or of minds more liberal and enlarged, than the Countess Thun and Countess Pergen; the houses of both are the rendezvous of everything that pretends to refinement in this capital." Years afterwards, Madame de Thun, in speaking of Hugh Elliot's appearance at this time at Vienna, said to Mr. Brydone, "Such as he was at eighteen years, so would I wish my son to be."[1]

Nothing can more strongly prove the engaging and attractive nature of his manners at this time, than the interest he inspired in persons so well acquainted with the world as Lord Stormont and Countess Thun, and I cannot resist giving one more extract in his praise from a letter of Lord Stormont's, which, though shown to his family, had not been written for their eyes.

"VIENNA, *Aug.* 5, 1772.

"I must leave off as I have several letters on hand, and give a little farewell dinner for Elliot,

[1] Mr. Brydone, writing from Vienna to Hugh in 1776, says, "Madame de Thun has everything but beauty. I have never seen a more agreeable or sensible woman. Her only wish, she says, is that her son should be like you." —*MS. Letters*, 1776.

Mr. Brydone, like many other English travellers, had been recommended by my grandfather to Madame de Thun.

who sets out to-morrow. I really see him go with much concern. The sweetness of his disposition, the manner in which the *elements* are *blended* in him, the variety of his accomplishments and pursuits, make him a young man so much after my heart, that I often lament in secret I am not the father of such a son, though God knows, I never was less disposed than at present to try my chance."

In writing to Sir Gilbert, Lord Stormont expresses a hope, that though Hugh had failed in the object of his journey to Vienna, "he would have no reason to repent it; it is an advantage to an Englishman to examine the detail, and contemplate all the consequences of severe discipline, though he may not expect, and perhaps should not attempt to introduce it at home."

Spurred on by a thirst for military adventure, Hugh proceeded from Vienna to Warsaw, which capital he reached after a hazardous journey in company with an aide-de-camp of Marshal Romanzow. In spite of the deplorable condition of the country overrun by the armies of the three great powers, and of a monarchy tottering to its fall,[1] Warsaw was at that time the most brilliant and dissipated Court in existence; and though the haughty

[1] The partition of Poland was determined in 1772.

minister[1] of Catherine did not think it worth while to rise from his chair when the King approached,[2] yet Stanislas Augustus, gifted himself with every grace, ruled over a nobility unequalled in Europe for beauty of person, for polish of manners, and for every accomplishment which lends a charm to society. No wonder then that the young Englishman should have found attractions enough to delay him there. From the correspondence which he subsequently carried on with the British Minister at Warsaw, Mr. Wroughton,[3] it appears that Princesses had conspired to detain him, and that the great Ambassador, Count Stackelberg himself, had been glad to see him go.

The "red planet Mars" was, however, still in the ascendant, and, under its influence, he again set forth to join the Russian army, then employed in Moldavia against the Turks.

This expedition, when known in England, seems to have been viewed with some displeasure by Sir Gilbert, who wrote his son several letters in a some-

[1] Stackelberg.

[2] Everybody knew Stackelberg to be the real king. If Stanislas entered the room when the Ambassador was at cards, the haughty Russian, without leaving his seat, motioned to the King to take another.—Wraxall's *Memoirs*.

[3] Mr. Wroughton, afterwards Sir Thomas, and minister at Stockholm. It was said that in his youth he had been a favoured admirer of Catherine II., and was removed from Petersburgh by the Grand-Duke's desire.

what severe tone, on the instability of purpose and want of self-control displayed by him, in converting a journey to Vienna in search of military employment, into a pleasure-trip for the gratification of curiosity. Sir Gilbert was however subsequently much mollified by the distinction gained by his son during his short period of service with the Russian army.

Most unfortunately I can find no details of this episode in his life, but allusions to some brilliant exploits of his, in a general action before Silistria, are frequent in the correspondence, and that the attention of the Russian commanders was attracted to him is proved by his having been honourably mentioned by Marshal Romanzow in his despatches to his own government, and by a letter from the Marshal to Hugh himself.[1]

Mr. Wroughton, in a letter to the Earl of Suffolk (Secretary of State for the Northern Department), dated Warsaw, 29th July 1773, thus writes: "Field-Marshal Romanzow, in his relation" (to Count

[1] Since writing this I have seen a fourth edition of Tooke's *Life of Catherine the Second*, in which, after an account of a surprise of the Russian army at Giurgevo by the Turks in the campaign of 1773, the following passage occurs: "An Englishman named Elliot, in the service of Russia, distinguished himself in an extraordinary manner at Giurgevo. He sprang with no less agility than boldness over the heads and sabres of the Spahis, and fell into the river, which he crossed by swimming.

Stackelberg of a victory over the Grand Vizier) "speaks of Captain Elliot with uncommon praise, who, by all acounts from the army, has distinguished himself with a truly British courage; he is indeed a young man of extraordinary merit."

Sir Gilbert, writing to his son, mentions that the Russian Minister in London, M. Pouschkin, had received a letter from Romanzow, in which he spoke of Hugh having highly distinguished himself; and Sir R. Gunning, Minister at Petersburgh, reports that Romanzow's despatches to the Imperial Government contained very strong expressions to the same effect. Writing to Hugh himself,[1] Marshal Romanzow congratulates him on the distinction he had achieved, and goes on thus:—

Jassi, 13 Avril 1773.

"Permettez que je vous parle à cette heure en ami. Vous avez parfaitement soutenu l'idée que j'ai conçue de vous, que j'ai généralement de votre nation. Vous vous êtes exposé une fois, ne le faites plus. Conservez vos jours pour des exploits dignes d'un bon citoyen qui se doit à sa patrie. Peut-être aurais-je un jour la satisfaction d'admirer, à la tête

[1] From this letter it appears that Hugh had been serving with the division under Potemkin.

Potemkin, who was disliked and distrusted by Romanzow, was shortly afterwards sent to Petersburgh with despatches, and was almost immediately installed in the post of favourite, for which time his power was scarcely less than that of the Empress herself.—*Life of Potemkin.*

de vos braves compatriotes, les talens que vous venez de déployer chez nous; et de me rappeller avec bien du contentement qu'en suivant votre penchant, vous vous êtes préparé à l'armée que j'ai l'honneur de commander, les voyes, qui vous conduiront par la suite dans le chemin de la gloire, dont vous avez, j'en suis convaincu, les plus justes notions."

In a letter which Hugh addressed to the Marshal after his return to England, he ascribes his appointment as Minister to the Court of Munich, to the favourable impression which had been produced on the King by the praises which Romanzow had bestowed upon him during his stay with the army, and he characteristically adds,—"Pardonnez si j'ose regretter leurs effets, puisque le Roi a jugé qu'elles me rendaient dignes d'un avancement fort peu ordinaire dans ce pays à mon age, quoique je me sens fort flatté de cette distinction, c'est avec bien de la peine que je me vois forcé de laisser partir seuls deux de mes compatriotes qui vont vous chercher aux bords du Danube." London, April 1774.

The first intimation of Lord Suffolk's intention to admit him into the "foreign minister line" was given to his father in the spring of 1773, and is mentioned in a letter addressed to Hugh at Warsaw. From

this time Sir Gilbert naturally became most impatient for his son's return to England, which, however, did not take place till the autumn of the year. On the 27th September 1793, Sir Gilbert wrote to Hugh that he was appointed plenipotentiary at Munich in Bavaria, with a salary of £5 per diem,[1] though his immediate predecessor had been reduced to £3, a sum manifestly inadequate to the expenses of a foreign minister, however economical he might be.

Though he was aware of his destination so early as September 1773, it appears that his appointment was not officially made until the spring of the following year. It bears the date of 29th April 1774.

From the allusions which are made to this period in the subsequent correspondence with his family, I imagine the winter to have been spent by them all in London, and that Hugh took his full share of the amusements of the day. His *maccaronism* seems to have been a subject of jest among his friends, and his fun and his "flames," his adventures and masquerades, and his attendance at Ranelagh, are frequently referred to in his sister's letters.

[1] This is a mistake. Lord Suffolk when making the appointment expressed an intention of raising the salary from £3 to £5 per diem, and did not apprehend there would be any difficulty in so doing, but from subsequent letters I find that no such alteration was made, and the salary remained as it had been in M. de Vismes' time. Mr. Harris at Berlin had £1500 a year, and spent, it was said, £3000.

The feelings with which Hugh set out on his new career may be guessed at by his letter to Marshal Romanzow. In announcing his appointment to a friend, he goes on :—"The only thing that consoles me is," etc., and he probably shared fully in the sentiments of disapprobation which were excited among his quondam comrades by the announcement of his new profession. "Comment," writes to him Lieutenant-Colonel Petersohn,[1] from Koutschouk Cainardgi, 25th July 1774, "vous désertez les drapeux de Mars et vous rentrez sous le joug de la politique ? Mais ce sont des contes ! Eh quoi ! cet Elliot aimable, sociable, léger, étourdi, galant, petit maître consent à s'enfermer dans le fond des cabinets ! mais c'est un larcin fait à la société ! Cela me confond dans mes idées. Quoi le vif et léger Elliot, va donc prendre sur soi l'air sombre et flégmatique d'un ministre, après ce phenomène je ne désespère pas un jour de voir le Pape habillé en husard."

On his way to Munich, Hugh made some stay in Paris, where the political changes which followed on the accession of Louis XVI. gave him matter for some interesting communications to his Government.

His first despatch from Munich is dated 23d June 1774.

[1] Colonel Petersohn, *chargé-d'affaires* of the Russian Court.

There was at that time little or no business of any interest depending between the Courts of Munich and of London.[1] The questions which occupy the chief portions of my grandfather's official correspondence relate to matters which affected the German Empire and the King of Great Britain in his electoral capacity; perhaps for that very reason they were all the more interesting to the King, whose cordial approval of the young minister's despatches was frequently signified through Lord Suffolk in public and private letters.

It appears to me, as far as I am able to judge, that though no important events occurred to call forth the manifestation of superior abilities in him during his residence at Munich, nevertheless he did show, from his first entrance into public life, considerable tact and unusual decision of character. A rapid penetration into men's motives, and a readiness in availing himself of the knowledge he had gained, were evidently characteristics of his mind; and on one occasion they were conspicuously shown, when, in conducting a delicate negotiation with the Electoral Court, having reason to suspect that the

[1] The Seven Years' War was just concluded. Austria and Prussia, however, continued to be rivals for power within the Germanic Empire, while France was suspected of a design to check the ambitious views of both, by instigating an alliance of the secondary German powers. The duty of an English minister consisted in watching the progress of their various intrigues.

Bavarian ministry were influenced by Austrian intrigues,[1] he spiritedly refused to transact the business through them, and in a personal interview with the Elector, took on himself the responsibility of urging a policy on that Prince which, as being adverse to the interests of the House of Austria, was viewed with ill-will by the minister, Count Seinsheim, whose sympathies were known to be Austrian.

At the period of my grandfather's arrival in Bavaria, nothing could exceed the gaiety of the Court, or the poverty and misery of the people.

In an official letter to Mr. Eden, 10th September 1774, he writes:—"To draw any picture of the state of this country would be to go back two ages in the progress of society. They are in nothing on a par with the rest of Europe, except in music and debauchery. . . . That you may judge of the universal ignorance that overspreads this country, I shall only give you two anecdotes which have fallen under my own observation. The trial by torture is the ordinary method, in this Electorate, of convicting criminals. Some time since, three poor fellows, after having been by this means forced to a confession, suffered capital punishment. A few

[1] Relating to the succession to the Duchy of Saxe-Lunenburg, in which the Hanoverian and Bavarian interests were opposed.

days afterwards, their innocence was proved by the capture of the really guilty parties. An Englishman who happened to be here at the time, expressed his surprise that so cruel a catastrophe should have occurred under the generally mild government of the Elector; this remark had like to have provoked a discussion, to avoid which the Englishman said that this point was much better treated of in a chapter in *L'Esprit des Loix*, than by anything he could say on the subject. Our Premier, with whom he was speaking, repeated several times the word *esprit*, on which the Englishman asked him if he had not read it. He said he believed it was among the number of books which the Pope had, considering his situation, given him a dispensation to read, but that, for his part, il n'aimait pas les *esprits forts*.

"Speaking lately with the President of Finances of the calamities occasioned by the late famine, and of the various plans proposed for avoiding the recurrence of such misfortunes, he said that in other countries precautions might be necessary, but in this, in case of a want of grain, they had an easy resource in the course of the Danube, by which they could always send off numbers of people on a short warning, and that they had already experienced

the advantage of this method of getting rid of the superfluous mouths in the last famine, when many thousands went to live in the Austrian dominions. To this ingenious plan is owing the present unpopulousness of this once peopled country. I am told the Austrians have now in their service enough of Bavarian subjects to conquer the whole Electorate."

Mr. Liston,[1] writing to Lady Elliot a few months after their arrival at Munich, tells her, "that several of our people of fashion and men of letters are still employed in search of the philosopher's stone,[2] and Mr. Elliot has almost drawn a challenge on himself, by venturing to doubt that burning the hand with St. Hubert's key was an infallible cure for the bite of a mad dog."

Miracles, too, were rife in Bavaria, and the young *protégé* of Hume and of Madame du Deffand must have had some difficulty in listening with patience to the feats of a certain Gassner, who, under the protection of the Bishop of Ratisbon, undertook to exorcise devils for the benefit of the Electorate.[3] He was said to have expelled legions of evil spirits

[1] Mr. Liston had accompanied my grandfather to Munich in the capacity of private secretary.

[2] Wraxall in 1779, found the Viennese nobility engaged in the same search. —See his *Memoirs of the Court of Berlin*, etc., vol. ii.

[3] See account in Wraxall's *Memoirs of the Court of Berlin*, etc.

from the poorer orders; and, to judge by the descriptions of Munich society, it is much to be feared that the fiends must have taken refuge with the higher!

The Court at that time consisted of the Elector and Electress, who were childless (the question of the Bavarian succession loomed already in the distance); of the Electress of Saxony, sister of the Elector of Bavaria, and daughter of the Emperor Charles the Seventh; of the Elector Palatine and his wife, who, like the Electress of Saxony, were only occasional though frequent visitors to Munich; and of the Princes of Deux-Ponts,[1] who claimed to be in the Bavarian succession after the death of the Elector Palatine, the immediate heir of the Elector of Bavaria, but who, like him, was childless. An old Margravine of Baden completed the circle of royalties, and her death followed the arrival of my grandfather within the year, and was thus notified to him by a fair maid of honour, whose letters are among his correspondence:—"La pauvre Margravine se meurt d'une hydropisie, et cela pour une pudeur mal placée, ne voulant montrer ses

[1] Prince Maximilian of Deux-Ponts, frequently mentioned in the letters, became King of Bavaria by the name of Maximilian I. He was godfather to my uncle of the same name.

jambes qui étaient enflées. Grands Dieux ! où la pudeur va-t-elle se placer !"

The Elector, an agreeable and accomplished, though weak man, seems at once to have been propitiated by my grandfather's pleasing appearance and manners, and to have made him his frequent companion in his hunting and shooting expeditions. The Electress, of whom we hear little, except that she had the unfortunate habit of winking her eyes in moments of unusual emotion, was surrounded by a bevy of fair ladies, among whom Madame Daun,[1] the correspondent already alluded to, and the "black-eyed Salerne," were the most admired.

The other chief personages, whose names or letters will be found of frequent occurrence in the correspondence, are the Prime Minister, Count Seinsheim; the Austrian Minister, Count Hartig, "a little decrepit man," who is described as constantly pushing forward to attract the Elector's attention, while the latter coolly talked over his head to my grandfather, to the great amusement of the Court; M. de Folard, the French Minister; Baron Sarny, the confidential counsellor of the Elector; and to these we may add the Preisings, Torrings, Bercheims,

[1] This lady, though unmarried, had brevet rank in virtue of her appointment at Court. Her letters are signed *Delta*.

and others, all leading members of the Bavarian nobility. Madame de Torring-Seefeld enjoyed the unquestionable dishonour of representing Madame de Montespan at a court which boasted to be a Versailles in miniature; and to prove that French sentiments on such subjects were in the ascendant, I need only quote a curious phrase in a note of *Delta's* to my grandfather:—"Notre pauvre Adelaïde" (Madame de Torring-Seefeld), "continue toujours malade, et l'on parle même en ville de choses qui me percent le cœur et qui me rendent triste. On dit qu'elle devrait se retirer; elle n'est, ma foi, pas encore d'âge à cela." The scene of the chief pleasures of the Court was Nymphenburg, a country palace of the Elector's, which Pollnitz describes in his Letters as a *lieu enchanté;* gardens, waters, woods, hunting-grounds diversified its delights. Three times a week during the summer the Electress held a court there, when tables for play were prepared in the galleries, while, for those who preferred them, gilded gondolas floated on the lake, and pony phaetons, driven by a "cavalier," were at the orders of the ladies who chose a moonlight drive through the woods. A supper, to which all foreigners were admitted, closed the entertainment. In Munich itself, the amusements were not

fewer :—"La Cour de Bavière est, sans contredit," says Pollnitz, "la plus galante et la plus polie de l'Allemagne. Nous y avons Comédie Française, bal, et jeu tous les jours. Il y a trois fois par semaine concert, tout le monde y assiste masqué; après le concert on joue et l'on danse. Ces assemblées publiques, où l'Electeur et toute sa cour assistent, sont d'un grand revenu pour les valets-de-chambre de l'Electeur; car outre que chacun paye à l'entrée, ils ont aussi l'argent des cartes, et ils sont intéressés dans presque toutes les banques. De sorte que ces domestiques ont presque tout l'argent de la noblesse."[1] Mr. Liston, too, speaks of similar expenses at Nymphenburg as being very heavy.

Such were the scenes, and such the *dramatis personæ* to which the young diplomatist was introduced in the summer of 1774, at the early age of twenty. The accounts of his presentation at Court are amusingly contrasted in his own and Mr. Liston's letters. "Le bon Liston," as he is frequently called by Hugh's foreign correspondents, gives a somewhat pompous description of the ceremony; of the dignity and grace of the Minister, which put the royalties themselves out of countenance, while the poor Electress took to opening and shutting one of her eyes

Munich, November 8, 1774.

[1] *Lettres du Baron Pollnitz*, tom. i. p. 328.

"with the quick involuntary motion" which "invariably betrays her embarrassment;"—of the extravagant praises of the ladies of the Court, and the open envy of the Austrian envoy; and last, not least, of the "bare-faced advances" and "masculine attacks" made on him by the fair sex in general, winding up thus:—"What I admire the most is that he has contrived not to make enemies of those he has refused, a point which is surely not to be managed without difficulty." There certainly does not appear to have been much scope for romance at the Court of Munich, and perhaps it was lucky for my grandfather that, as he himself says, "there is not one good-looking woman in this town, by good fortune, for I should be in great danger of learning to talk *en Pastor Fido*, such is the style of this country."

His letter to his mother, written after his presentation to the Electoral family, is full of boyish fun:—

July 1774. "I made my speech and bows with becoming gravity, and did not once lose command of my upper lip, which I find sometimes apt to betray the mournful composure to which I can now at command bring the rest of my face." On leaving the presence of the Electress a terrible dilemma presented itself, how to retreat without turning his back on the courtly circle; happily the terpsichorean instructions

of M. Gallini rushed on his mind, and a neatly-executed *pirouette* extracted him from the difficulty "in a manner which could not have wounded the susceptibilities of the most sensitive *Frau* in the empire."

And so he began his new life,—"youth at the prow, and pleasure at the helm;" but by the spring of 1775 clouds were appearing on the horizon; dissatisfaction with the tedious frivolity of the society, disgust with the "venal creatures" who preyed upon the Court, and daily-increasing money difficulties, contributed to give a tone of gloom to his mind. The most cheerful feature of the time consisted in the occasional presence of young English travellers, who, amid much folly and vice, were not wholly unmindful of better things. Among those the most conspicuous were Mr. Pitt,[1] one of my grandfather's constant correspondents; Mr. Stanley,[2] a son of Lord Derby's; Mr. Bagnall, of whose romantic passion for a fair Bavarian, Delta writes as follows:—"Il est devant une jolie femme comme en présence d'une laide Impératrice,—c'est bien Anglais;" and Lord Lindsay,[3] who was travelling with Mr. Brydone. Mr. Brydone, Mr. Pitt, and

[1] William Morton Pitt, afterwards M.P. for Dorsetshire.
[2] Mr. Stanley died in 1779.
[3] Eldest son of the Duke of Ancaster, succeeded his father and died in 1777.

my grandfather, in their subsequent correspondence, frequently allude to a scheme which appears to have originated with my grandfather, and of which the object was the formation of a society of patriotic men. "I mean," writes Mr. Pitt, "of true patriotic men—not such as the word now means—who should unite to carry on good schemes during their whole lives."[1] "How many hours we have spent in discussing the plan," he writes on another occasion, and how infinitely superior to the society in which they lived did such discussions make them! All glory to English influences which, in the midst of idle dissipation, can still suffice to raise ennobling aspirations. To borrow a phrase of South's, "leaning on Hope's anchor, they did not stick it in the mud," but looked on from present follies and failures to future years of useful life at home.

Dreaming patriots, and black-eyed maids of honour, what fate was yours? Did the beguiling phantoms of your youth become the haunting ghosts of after years? I know not; but to one of them life was checkered henceforth with joy and sorrow,

[1] One of these schemes appears to have been for the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. A great impression had been produced in those young Englishmen by the sight of the numbers of their countrymen who, with English hearts, were serving in foreign armies. Mr. Pitt mentions that four hundred English officers belonging to the Austrian army had been presented in one day to the Duke of Gloucester, then travelling abroad. Many of those brave men were affected to tears.

with failure and success, in a greater degree than common, and time floated him rapidly away from the sheltered scenes of youth.

It seems to have been the misfortune of my grandfather's temperament, and one which was strengthened by circumstances, that fits of energy and of high aspiration were rapidly succeeded by depression and *ennui*. With romantic notions of honour, he combined habits of carelessness and irregularity, and a facility of disposition which could not fail to bring his affairs into disorder; with a peculiarly sensitive and imaginative mind, he was placed by circumstances in a society which ignored every species of delicacy; with intellectual tastes, his life led him among singularly uncultivated minds. And these contradictions of temperament and of conditions were not overruled, as they might have been, by a determined will. There was in him a certain indolence and instability of character which made performance ever lag behind promise; liking display but hating restraints; doing as others did with a dissatisfied consciousness that he should have done better; loving keenly his absent friends, but alienating them by unpunctuality or neglect in his correspondence; morbidly brooding over disappointments, while forgetful of the

singular good fortune of his career—his letters at this period give one the feeling of a character that was out of joint.

Early in 1775. To an application which he made for leave, for the purpose of setting his affairs in order, Lord Suffolk returned a most kind and friendly refusal. Nevertheless, on the score of ill-health, he did shortly after absent himself from his post, and placed himself under the treatment of a celebrated quack doctor at Berne, M. Shuppach.[1]

That the reasons for this journey were chiefly connected with money matters, is proved by the fact of his assuming a false name, that of Mr. Thomas Bellamy.

From his boyish days, Hugh seems to have been careless and extravagant in his habits. From Warsaw, when setting out for Constantinople, he wrote to his father thus: "As I am living on my patrimony now, I must live on nothing hereafter;" a communication to which his father might have replied, like the man in a French play, "L'air, Monsieur, est un fort sot aliment." But no previous difficulties had approached in gravity to those which he was now obliged to confess to his family,

1 Shuppach was a Swiss peasant of small learning, but "with fifty years' experience of the practice of medicine," during which he had discovered the effect of many herbs, and was supposed to have been successful in the treatment of various diseases.

and Sir Gilbert's letters to his son are both severe and affecting. In one of them he expatiates on the mortification he had experienced in abandoning some intended improvements at Minto, a step which the demands made upon him by his sons had obliged him to take. In another letter he says, with admirable good sense, "We may certainly live happy in great poverty, but in modern Europe one cannot act in any public situation without great fortune or unrelenting economy."

It does not appear from the correspondence that the embarrassments my grandfather had to contend with were attributable to any other cause than carelessness in his general habits. At a period when the leading young men of his country were confirmed gamblers, he seems to have had no taste for play, though living at a place where it formed the staple amusement. He no doubt did play, and may have lost more than he could afford, but of serious debts incurred on this account there are no traces. The unfavourable reports of his manner of life which seem to have reached his friends in England at this time, are by them referred to two heads: 1*st*, Expensive habits and a taste for show; 2*d*, An undisguised contempt for the society in which he lived. To these accusations

Mr. Liston replied in detail.[1] The first charge he dismissed at once by the statement that from the moment my grandfather had perceived the inadequacy of his means to support the ministerial dignity, according to the notions he conceived of it, he had manfully entered on a system of economy and retrenchment. The second charge was not to be so lightly disposed of. "I wish the dislike were more owing to *maccaronism* than it really is. That affectation would soon wear off, while the uncommon delicacy he feels with regard to characters and manners is likely to attend him through life. He has indeed too much good sense, and is much too well bred to discover the least symptoms of disapprobation to the persons concerned; but it is difficult to reject the addresses of almost every woman in the place, without giving offence to some, and his dislike to the society in general is betrayed by a constant preference of English men, English ideas, and English things. He has, however, really much regard for the Elector, the French Minister, and some others." Mr. Liston's letters[2] at this time

[1] Some of the unavoidable expenses of a foreign minister are described as very large. At Munich, he was expected to fee every officer of the Elector's household on his introduction at Court; to be driven in a coach and four when accompanying the Elector to his country seats; and to pay largely when mounted on the Elector's horses.

[2] In these letters, my grandfather is named under the disguise of the Prince of Monaco.

not only throw much light on my grandfather's life, but prove the writer of them to have been a wise and kind friend, and a judicious adviser.

It appears in those days the *personnel* of a mission at one of the minor Courts was confined to the minister himself. Mr. Liston, who acted as my grandfather's secretary, went out with him in an unofficial capacity,[1] and during this very year, 1775, he had to consider the eligibility of accepting a professorship at Edinburgh, which, however, he rejected for the sake of remaining near my grandfather. During the latter's frequent absences from his post, Mr. Liston was from time to time called on to correspond with the Foreign Office, and he was at last regularly admitted into the diplomatic body as *chargé-d'affaires.*

Mr. de Vismes, my grandfather's predecessor at the Court of Munich, had no secretary, "contenting himself with a boy, who understood no language but his own, merely to copy for him."

To return from this digression to my grandfather's concerns. Having spoken of the weaknesses to which his money difficulties were in part attribut-

[1] Among my grandfather's papers is a letter of introduction to a gentleman who had officiated as tutor to the sons of "Mr. Penn, the proprietor of Pennsylvania," and who was now anxious to be employed as secretary, or in some similar capacity.

able, it must not be overlooked that his virtues also led him into acts of prodigality which prudence condemned. "Have you," says Mr. de Vismes, writing from Stockholm, "discovered a gold deposit, that you think yourself justified in giving a hundred louis to Madame Sarny ?"

Madame Sarny was the widow of the Elector's most confidential and favourite adviser, Baron Sarny, who in his lifetime had been of signal use to my grandfather, both by showing him personal kindness, and by furthering English views of policy in opposition to those of Austria. He had died suddenly, leaving his widow in circumstances of great distress, from which no one but my grandfather showed any readiness to relieve her. In a grateful letter, which she addressed to him at this time, she wrote : "The Elector has been with me, and is very kind, but he did not say anything of assisting me."

Shortly "after Mr. Elliot's arrival at Munich, a circumstance occurred which attracted general attention to him. During a violent thunderstorm, the lightning set fire to a village in sight of the Palace of Nymphenburg, where the Court then was. While the courtiers were crossing themselves, and praying that the next bolt might not strike the palace, Mr.

Elliot hurried out of the drawing-room, and ran through the storm to the village. Arrived there, he found the people panic-stricken, and instantly set them an example of courage and activity, by going to the assistance of those belonging to the burning house, at the same time putting his purse, in which there were from ten to fifteen guineas, in the hands of one of the sufferers."[1]

To his servants my grandfather was indulgent to a fault; and the *fourberies* of a certain valet, La Coste, who had his prototypes in the Scapins of French comedy, are frequently alluded to in the correspondence.

The early part of 1775 found the young diplomatist rusticating in Switzerland. How he passed his time there is not told us; but from a letter of Madame de Thun's, it seems that he had written to her in higher praise of the scenery of the country than of its *passionless* and apathetic inhabitants, for she writes thus in reply:—

. . . "Je n'aime pas à me persuader '*que l'homme dégénère quand il n'est que laborieux, frugal, et sans passions*,' il me parait si difficile de bien diriger ces dernières que je n'aime pas à me convaincre qu'elles sont absolument nécessaires pour élever l'âme. . . . Luxembourg, 24 Août 1775.

[1] Letter from Mr. Liston to Lady Elliot.

Je ne saurais m'empêcher de croire que le peuple sans passions sera le plus heureux et contribuera davantage à la tranquillité générale." And then she adds with some *malice*, "Si vos provinciaux en Amérique, par exemple, étaient comme les Suisses des montagnes, ils vous donneraient bien moins de besogne aujourd'hui. . . . Vous conviendrez avec moi que s'ils n'étaient que frugal, laborieux, et sans passions, ils se seraient laissés imposer les lois par l'Angleterre, qui n'étant point onéreuses ne peuvent choquer que leur passion de l'indépendance.

"Je vous demande mille pardons. J'étais Bostonienne de cœur. Je le suis un peu moins à présent; cependant j'ai toutes les peines du monde à me rendre bonne Anglaise dans cette occasion."

The Austrian fine ladies were like their sisters of Paris, "*Bostoniennes* de cœur;" but a few more years of the reign of the reforming Emperor Joseph, and a few more steps taken in the direction of Revolution in France, sufficed to change the current of their sympathies.

1775. The pleasantest feature in the family correspondence at this date is the delight with which all hail the successful *début* of Gilbert Elliot at the bar. Every letter from home dilates upon it, and Hugh's answers are full of joy and affection. Lady Elliot

tells it very characteristically to Mr. Liston, in a letter which he describes as filling thirteen pages, "beautifully written."

"I know," she says, "the pleasure it will give you to learn the success my son has had in his first appearance in his profession. He has given a rare instance of resolution in withdrawing himself from the pursuits of the world to those of the most persevering study. When it came to the point you may believe I had much trepidation, although I had always comforted myself that, if he failed in this, it would be the first thing that ever he failed in that he attempted in his life; yet, as I had so seldom heard him speak, I had some degree of doubt of the rapidity of his tongue and the strength of his voice. But I was soon relieved with a note from Sir John Dalrymple, saying, '*Thanks to the Gods! the boy has done his duty;*' to which was added, '*The De'il a fears o' him:*' to which I answered, *Son of Æmilius, and thy cousin, Paulus, he must do more, and by the Gods he will!* He is now deemed a counsel learned in the law. He is greatly encouraged by his success, and firmly rooted in the ground on which his ancestors on both sides flourished." London, April 1775.

Money matters having been arranged, and his

health re-established, my grandfather returned to Ratisbon in the course of June or July; and, except during short intervals, he remained there until he finally left the country in the autumn of the following year.

December 1775. For economical reasons, and perhaps partly too in indulgence of a morbid dislike to society, the life which he now entered upon at Ratisbon was one of such extreme seclusion as to cause much remark and censure among his friends. The economical views which justified it were probably those which he was most anxious to conceal from the public, and, with his usual heedlessness of the opinion of the society in which he lived, he did not, by disguising that he despised it, seek to avoid giving offence. Several of his correspondents at this time condemn his universal scepticism. "You are too hard on the fair sex," says one. "I had rather not be so clear-sighted as to men's motives," says another. It was a phase of feeling which most men pass through. Self-deceived even more than deceived by others, they have still to learn that life will reflect their own image—"as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."

While a young man does not pay his debts, all men are rogues to him; while he makes love to

twenty women, the faithlessness of the sex will be his favourite theme.

His retirement at Ratisbon provoked two excellent letters from Countess Thun.

"Je suis résolue de vous gronder, et cela tout de bon. Allons, justifiez vous. Vivez-vous comme un ours? pourquoi fuyez-vous le monde? pourquoi vivez-vous comme une taupe dans un trou? Pourquoi maltraitez-vous les femmes? que vous ont elles donc fait ces pauvres femmes? vous ne les haïssiez pas trop autrefois! Pourquoi cachez-vous les talens que le ciel vous a donnés; et enfin, pourquoi n'êtes-vous plus cet aimable garçon d'autrefois? Si c'est humeur, il ne faut pas se la passer; si c'est mélancolie, il faut faire un effort pour s'en tirer; si c'est chagrin, il faut se dissiper; si c'est une passion tendre, c'est trop fi! je ne veux pas seulement le croire, il faut une raison plus essentielle et plus sérieuse pour un changement comme celui-là." Vienna, October 1775.

My grandfather must have replied to this letter by a statement of the pecuniary difficulties which had made it incumbent on him to withdraw from the expenses of society, for, in a letter dated December 14, 1775, after congratulating herself on having drawn from him a confidence so honourable to himself, she proceeds to give him some excellent advice

on the necessity of making his system of economy compatible with the other requirements of his daily life, since "le moyen d'une retraite absolue" is not always within one's power, though no doubt more agreeable to a young man's humour than a constant carefulness in the management of his expenses.

To his misanthropical objections to society, she also replies with no less good sense :—

Countess Thun, Vienna, 1775.

"Je ne prétends pas que vous voyïez le monde avec les mêmes yeux dont vous l'avez vu avant de le connaître,—il est impossible d'être longtemps la dupe de son néant. . . . Mais que diriez-vous d'un acteur qui se trouvant sur la scène s'occuperait de l'illusion au lieu de remplir son esprit et son cœur de son rôle? Chacun se doit à soi-même et aux autres de jouer son rôle de son mieux tant qu'il est sur la scène, ... Rien n'est plus dangereux pour un jeune homme avec votre esprit, votre cœur et vos talens, que ce sistème d'indifférence. Il l'est d'autant plus, que vous sentant par l'élévation de vos sentimens, et par le mépris de ce qui fait l'objet des désirs du commun des hommes, au-dessus du reste de l'humanité, vous ne vous en défiez pas!

"Quand on ne trouve rien dans ce globe digne de la peine de l'estreindre, quand on raisonne lorsqu'on devrait agir, quand on laisse éteindre ses passions

plutôt que de les diriger, et qu'alors on manque de l'aiguillon que la Nature nous a donné pour nous faire agir, on reste dans une inaction qui finit par nous rendre coupable. Et c'est là où vos raisonnements vous conduiront insensiblement. Je suis de votre avis qu'un homme qui se sacrifie au désir de se faire une réputation est bien la dupe ; mais je crois aussi qu'il y a une sorte d'ambition qu'il ne faut jamais laisser éteindre en soi,—celle d'être utile à ses semblables. Ce but là est grand par soi-même, et mérite bien la peine de s'en occuper. Quand aux femmes, vous pensez bien que je ne vous en parlerai pas sérieusement. J'en demande pardon à mon sexe, mais j'aime bien mieux qu'on ne parle à aucune que de s'occuper uniquement de toutes. Je ne connais rien dans la nature plus méprisable qu'un homme qui en fait son unique affaire."

Of an indifference to fame, or an unreadiness to seek it in active exertion, my grandfather could not be accused ; his mistake lay in supposing that he could only usefully serve his country in one way, and that way one which was not open to him. Either while in Switzerland, or soon after his return to Germany, he had communicated privately to Lord Suffolk his ardent desire to join the army in America as a volunteer.

Believing that his knowledge of foreign languages and of foreign armies, might make him useful in acting with the foreign contingent, he begged that if his services could be made available, he might on any terms rejoin his old profession.

Lord Suffolk's answer is most kind.

Private, August 1775. "The personal activity with which you are eager to support the cause of Great Britain, does you the greatest honour, and I must request you not to think me insensible to the spirit which animates you on this occasion, if I attempt to check the zeal of it at present, and advise you to defer, at least, the execution of the ideas it has suggested. I don't say that the time may not come when such an example as you propose may be of essential service; if it should, I will join with you in laying aside all other considerations, and recommend it to you to set it. But at this moment I should not act with the regard I feel for you if I did not dissuade you from quitting the walk you are in, in which you do so well, and are so likely to be advanced."

1776. In the following spring, my grandfather again repeated his desire to join the army, and was again with equal kindness dissuaded from doing so by Lord Suffolk. By this time, however, his intentions and wishes had reached his family, and had natur-

ally excited their warm opposition, and apparently the matter soon afterwards dropped.

Sir Gilbert's letters on the subject show more impatience of his son's Quixotism than of sympathy with his feelings. His mother warns him that the cause of his country would not be much advanced by his losing an arm or a leg; while Mr. Eden,[1] with his usual entire confidence in the goodness of the cause supported by the existing government of the country, writes as follows:—

"I fully feel with you that the period is come when the noble enthusiasm of individuals in the Old World, is the only weapon that can be brandished with success against the mad multitude of the New, but your father sees and thinks that there are spirited Britons enough still left to answer the national purposes, without his hazarding a son who has too fair a prospect in his present line of life to turn from it without some more pressing exigency than yet exists."

The mania of volunteering for the army appears to have seized at the same moment upon all the young Englishmen who had spent the winter of 1774 or 1775 at Munich together. One of them,

[1] William Eden, Esq., Private Secretary to Lord Suffolk. He married, in the autumn of 1776, Eleanor Elliot, Hugh's youngest sister, and in 1789 was created Lord Auckland.

Mr. Stanley,[1] did accompany his uncle, General Burgoyne, to America; the rest were obliged by their families to content themselves with vain aspirations after "distinctions to be earned on Bunker's Hill."

Lord Lindsay, the only son of the Duke of Ancaster, then travelling under the charge of Mr. Brydone, was one of those most bent on volunteering for the army. He was prevented from doing so by the commands of his father and the tears of his mother; while Hugh Elliot, who was supposed to have inoculated him with the obnoxious idea, was reproached bitterly by his own family for having countenanced so wild and senseless a plan. The parents of Lord Lindsay might have seen cause to reconsider their determination could they have read the letters written about their son by his mentor and companions at this time. That an active profession was the only chance of saving him from a wasted and disgraceful life was an opinion shared by all.

Madame de Thun, who had become acquainted with Lord Lindsay at Vienna, prays that when her son grows up, she may not be so blind to his real

[1] Lady Charlotte Stanley had married General Burgoyne against the wishes of her own family.

interest as "cette pauvre Duchesse." Mr. Brydone, in one of several letters from Vienna, thanks my grandfather for having inspired Lord Lindsay with some of that "generous and noble patriotic zeal which you alone seem capable of communicating to all who converse with you. . . . Till he had the good fortune to meet with you, I always dreaded that pleasure would have been the only pursuit of his life; you have convinced him of the extreme insipidity and contemptibleness of such a character." 1776.

Madame de Thun's wise advice had fallen on good ground, and was bringing forth fruit.

The summer of 1776 was probably the most agreeable which my grandfather had passed since his arrival in Germany. At Ratisbon he became intimate with a coterie of pleasant people, of whom the Count[1] and Countess Neipperg formed the centre. Count Neipperg represented Bohemia in the Diet; he was afterwards, for many years, Austrian Minister at Naples, and was well known as a cultivated, agreeable man; his wife, young, pretty, and, by all accounts, of most engaging manners, was supposed by the fair ladies of Ratisbon to have

[1] His sister was the celebrated Princess of Aunsperg, who, for many years, was the object of the devotions of the late Emperor Francis; the last act of his life had been to give her a draft on the Royal Treasury for 20,000 francs; the first act of Maria Theresa's widowhood was to confirm it.

some share in drawing forth "le sauvage Elliot" from his retirement. However that may have been, he became the life and soul of *the set.* Many pleasant meetings took place at the Neippergs' country-house at Stauff; and, when these were over, and my grandfather was recalled to England, "in order," as Lord Suffolk wrote to him privately, "that he might be intrusted with affairs of greater importance, his Majesty having been so well satisfied with his previous conduct," we learn much of the regrets his absence caused, from the letters of Mr. Liston, and of the Marquis Louis d'Yve, a near relation of the Neippergs, and not an unfrequent correspondent of my grandfather in after years.

Mr. Liston, who, from being tutor, secretary, and adviser, had now become the confidant of a sentimental correspondence, writes with most amusing distress to the volatile Minister, of the difficulty he had in inventing probable excuses for his chief, when post after post arrived without any letters for a certain lady; while, on the contrary, *hers* were so heavy and frequent, that Mr. Liston was obliged to take them out of their covers, "though, on my honour, I don't read a word," and, even then, the postage was ruinous!

Again, the lady *would* learn English, and *ce bon*

Liston was made to undertake the part of instructor. "I should not so much mind," said he, "if the husband" (who was a literary character) "were not always present, puzzling me with questions about grammar."

On one occasion an archery *fête* was held at Stauff, and, as a delicate compliment to England, the target was made to represent an American, "revêtu de toutes les marques distinctives dont vos ennemis se sont décorés," and the fair Countess herself had the good fortune to knock down the head, a feat which afforded no small pleasure to her, and some amusement to her guests. The scene was retailed in a letter by Mr. Liston to my grandfather, and, he adds, "they overwhelm me with the most flattering distinctions, which, however, lead me into many expenses." Poor Mr. Liston! neither loving nor beloved, his place was no sinecure. He had to remonstrate, to moderate, to excuse, to write, to teach, and to pay! Whatever scrapes his chief got into, *il laissait rédiger les pièces justificatives* by his secretary!

Thus, towards the end of the summer of 1776, my grandfather's first mission came to an end, and Mr. Morton Eden "reigned in his stead;" the latter made his *début* at Munich with great success, the

people pronounced him "*engel-schön*," and the *dames de cour* smiled graciously on one who promised to be less indifferent to their charms than his predecessor had been.

I wish, for the sake of my grandfather's reputation for politeness, I could have ended this chapter of his history without mentioning a trait which is, however, too characteristic to be omitted. "How could you," says his friend Mr. Pitt, writing to him some time afterwards, "think yourself justified in telling your Munich friends that the day of your départure was the happiest of your life? Was it not unnecessary to make a round of visits for that purpose?"

NOTE.—On his way through Paris my grandfather visited Madame du Deffand, and thus she writes of him to Horace Walpole:—"Le petit Elliot est tout-à-fait aimable; il a beaucoup d'esprit, il sent encore un peu l'école, mais c'est qu'il est modeste, et qu'il est la contre partie de Charles Fox; la sorte de timidité qu'il a encore sied bien à son âge; surtout quand elle n'empêche pas qu'on en démèle le bon sens et l'esprit.—*Corres. de Madame du Deffand.*

CHAPTER II.

1772 TO 1779.

THE FAMILY.

I HAVE now brought down the narrative of my grandfather's early life to the period of his return to England, and the close of his first mission, in the autumn of 1776, and in doing so I have confined myself solely to that portion of his correspondence which bears directly upon his affairs. It will therefore be desirable, before going any further, to cast a backward glance over the other portion of the letters now before me,—that which relates to the circumstances of his correspondents. An additional reason for doing so, before entering on another year, consists in the changes which occurred in the family in the early part of 1777, and which amounted to a break-up of the family home.

When, in 1771, Hugh "tore himself from his mother's arms," as she expresses it, "to seek honourable employment in a foreign land," the family

group had already lost one of its members by the departure of Alick for India, which had taken place some time before; but there still remained under the paternal roof-tree two sons and two daughters. Gilbert, the eldest, was pursuing his studies at Oxford. Bob was a Westminster school-boy. Isabella, a young lady going out in the world, was the delight of her mother's life. Eleanor, a wild young girl, called by her brothers by many *aliases* of which perhaps "Billingsgate Nell" is the most descriptive, was studying French, with no great success, under the charge of Madame Dumont, and setting all rules of English grammar and orthography at defiance.

It could not be expected that Sir Gilbert's letters to a son under the age of twenty would contain any confidential communications on political matters. Nor do they. But there are indications in the general correspondence of his political influence having suffered some diminution about this time, or rather before it.

Horace Walpole, in his last Journals, under the date of February 1773, mentions Sir Gilbert Elliot as the man "whom the King most trusted, next to Lord Bute, but who nevertheless had been acting discontent for the last two years." He also fre-

quently alludes to misunderstandings between Sir Gilbert and Lord North, and on one occasion describes a popular vote of Sir Gilbert's, on which he divided the House against Ministers, as a revenge for Lord Barrington's refusal to give a commission in the army to one of his sons.

This theory is not, however, consistent with two others equally put forward by Walpole. *First*, That Sir Gilbert, in opposing Lord North, was acting secretly by the King's instigation. *Second*, That military patronage was entirely at the disposal of the King. For it is obvious, that had Sir Gilbert's influence with the King at this time been so great as Walpole supposed it, he would not have met with the treatment from Lord Barrington, by which he thought himself so much aggrieved.

Certain allusions in the letters rather lead me to suppose that the King himself may have been somewhat cool in the matter of Hugh's commission, and that when the latter left England, his father's position at Court was not what it had been. At all events, there can be no doubt that Sir Gilbert saw in the refusal of Lord Barrington to nominate his son to a captaincy in the Guards, a studied insult to himself, and a triumph to his enemies. It was "a party move," as indeed every question affecting a

"Scot" was sure to be considered in those days. Lady Elliot not only shared in her husband's feelings, but was still more sensitive to the hardship of parting with her promising and brilliant son, at a moment when she had believed him to be about to enter on an honourable career in the service of his country; this distress bore all the harder upon her because she was at the time suffering from ill health, and smarting under the disappointment of a hope she had conceived of seeing her eldest daughter suitably married. Many a long letter did she write to her absent son on the subject of her grievances.

Lady Elliot to Hugh, 1772.

"These things give me a disgust to the world that I can hardly overcome, but yet am chained to the oar, and called upon to drag still into public a dispirited tormented mind. I can seldom go anywhere without meeting persons and objects mortifying to me. Lord Barrington—faugh! my soul rises at him!—is very studious to make up to me when we meet, which politeness I return with equal politeness, although I see an evident sneer on the face of a false heart. What a farce is this world!"

Again she writes, "One sees one's-self, from faction and narrow jealousy, an object of universal ill-will, and no support from any quarter except the talents of a person however in some degree upon the de-

cline." Lady Elliot's style like her feelings was vehement, and that her family did not share in the latter to their fullest extent, is evident from another passage in the same letter, in which she says, "You know the characters of your father and brother's philosophic minds so well, as to know that they cannot enter into nor understand what agitates me; their affections are equal to mine, but their imaginations are not so sensible, and they often do not perceive, or do not care for what agitates me."

This assertion is partly justified by the very concise manner in which Gilbert informs his brother of the event that had so wrung his mother's spirit, namely the marriage of Isabella's faithless adorer to another lady. "Mr. Rumbold's marriage gives us all great satisfaction. My sister is glad he is out of her way," and in the autumn of the same year, he rejoices that an alarm of opposition to Sir Gilbert in the county was to carry them all to Minto, and would give Lady Elliot an occupation she was better fitted for than that of match-making. A few months more sufficed to give her some of her children's philosophy, and alluding to her once desired son-in-law, she barely admits "that he *might* have made a good husband, though corpulent and a money worm."

Gilbert to Hugh.

1772. The summer of 1772 was a melancholy one in England and Scotland, owing to the numerous failures of banks; among which, that of Fordyce was the most felt. Dismal are the scenes described. "Not a workman to be seen in the Adelphi, the Adams having stopped payment. For some days everybody alarmed and suspicious, and the run on the banks so great that it was a wonder any of them stood it." In the midst of these dreary descriptions it is refreshing to find Isabella writing cheerily of her London amusements. The Opera was still good, "though the departure of Madame Heinel had half broke the maccaronis' hearts;" but "the pleasantest thing we have done was a water-party to Richmond in papa's barge. We dined there, and walked and drank tea. We had Banks and Solander, and their music, that, if they had gone round the world, would have gone with them. At Richmond we met another party, with your friend Colonel Harcourt and his music, and we joined parties and went together to Vauxhall. We stopped at Kew, and serenaded the Prince of Wales. Solander is very happy that he is not sure of going his voyage, though he does not dare say so. They have quarrelled with Captain Cook, who goes in the 'Resolution.'"

Isabella to Hugh, June 23.

The autumn found the family at Minto, where they were joined by Gilbert in time for the Kelso races; he making his journey from Scarborough in a collier, which was unable to make the Tyne at Newcastle, and landed him and a friend on the Durham coast.

While in the North, Lady Elliot and some of the family went to Edinburgh to see the Dowager Lady Elliot, who died in the following year; and from thence Lady Elliot writes thus characteristically of the society to her son Hugh:—

"The misses are, I am afraid, the most rotten part of the society. Envy and jealousy of their rivals have, I fear, a possession in their minds, especially the old part of the young ladies, who grow perfect beldames in that small society; but upon the whole there are many worthy, agreeable, well-principled people, if you get over the language, manner, and address, which are at first striking." Minto, 1772.

Early in 1773, we find Lady Elliot writing again from London. As I have already said, Sir Gilbert was taking an active part in Parliament, and one not always friendly to Lord North; but the kind letters of Lord Stormont respecting Hugh, and the active friendship of Lord Suffolk, were producing kindly civilities on the part of the King; and before London, 1773.

the summer Sir Gilbert wrote to his son that it was intended to send him Plenipotentiary to Munich.

Minto, 1773. The letters from Sir R. Gunning and Mr. Wroughton, which were addressed to the Foreign Office in London, and made such gratifying mention of Hugh's military exploits, were read by the family at Minto, and with equal pride and rejoicing; and before the winter arrived they had had the happiness of welcoming him to England, and of embracing him again in his London home.

London, 1773. At that time Hugh was clearly his mother's favourite son; "the joy of my life, the friend of my heart," as she frequently calls him; "planted firmly in the hearts of all;" and all the dearer to her, perhaps, because not all her pride in the parts and character of her eldest son could ever make her overlook his habits of silence and reserve, which were probably increased in her presence by her utter absence of self-control. In the course of 1773, he was entered at Lincoln's Inn, and, his mother tells us, was highly popular there, "where prepossession in a man's favour is nine points of the game." No doubt that during the following winter both the brothers entered fully into the amusements and follies of the town, for their subsequent correspondence has many a reference to those "merry days," with

no less frequent reflections on the drain they had inflicted on "*the Rhino.*"

From the correspondence which recommenced on Hugh's departure for Munich early in 1774, we 1774.
gather that the well-known figure of the young maccaroni riding a long-tailed pony in the park had been sketched by Lord Townshend for the benefit of his pretty new wife, and that she carried it about in her work-bag, though not deeming it "prudent" to let her young adorer have a copy of her own portrait. Miss Waterton, the great "fortune," afterwards Lady Grimston, was much touched by the sight of Hugh's dejection on bidding her good-bye, though "she was not so romantic as I should have been," said Lady Elliot, "and preferred a rich peer to a young envoy;" but "Miss" somebody else "would really have done for you, and made you a rich good wife, if you had not been determined to say she was crooked and squinted, before you looked at her." His old flames, the Duchesses of Northumberland and of Queensberry, "the latter beautiful and coquettish as ever," are mentioned, as frequently inquiring for him, and so too did the King and Queen. "No one ever left so many friends," said his mother. "We are certainly the happiest family in the world in ourselves," wrote his sister, "but, I

think, of all I love you and my mother best;" and Gilbert in the same strain says,—"I lose in your absence, my dear Hugh, more than anything you have left behind can make up, a true friend and almost the only companion I perfectly love. We have all lost a great deal of cheerfulness, and all know it will not return till it brings you with it."

Yet, in spite of all this love and praise, Lady Elliot's first letter after her son's departure for Munich shows that she was not blind to the defects which threatened to obscure his many remarkable qualities. Love—true love—is never blind; quick to see the first germ of good, it is no less quick to discern the quarter whence danger may come to the thing beloved. It is the triumph of love *not* to love blindly, but, knowing all, seeing all, to love on, through all, and in spite of all.

After which digression on the nature of love, I resume the thread of my great-grandmother's reflec-

Minto, 1774. tions. Writing to Hugh from Minto, July 28, 1774, his mother tells him she had begun to write letters to him which, on reflection, she had destroyed, but that she was now determined, once for all, to enter fully to him into her ideas of his character, and of the dangers his peculiar temperament would expose him to, sparing neither praise nor blame, "for I have

never known an ingenuous mind the worse for praise, nor a candid one for blame;" and she then proceeds to draw and to contrast two ideal portraits of a young man, who, possessed of certain good qualities and defects, rose in the one case, by overcoming his faults, to the height of fortune, and, in the other, by want of the same powers of self-control, disappointed all the expectations which had been formed of him.

The letter is too long to transcribe, and has all the peculiar faults of Lady Elliot's style—exaggeration in expression, and a redundancy of words—but it is the production of a clever woman, and of a tender mother. The picture she gives of Hugh is distinct. Slight and slim in figure, with handsome features, and a spirited countenance, his appearance pleased, even before his lively wit and soft and gentle manners confirmed the first impression. Cultivated in mind, and possessing all manly accomplishments, he had made himself "a name in courts and camps before attaining his fifth lustrum," and yet remained "the best of sons and brothers, and the most romantic of lovers."

But now comes *le revers de médaille*, and we are told of the possibility that this uncommon character might "be rendered useless by a want of

economy which ruined his affairs; by giving himself up to the indulgence of ridiculing characters that he despised; by neglecting the common forms of civility and attentions, as visits, letters, etc., and yielding to an hereditary sauntering, *alias* indolence, which prevented him from cultivating his talents—led him to lie in bed in the morning—to lounge undressed till near dinner-time (as is practised at Horseman's coffee-house, Oxford)—to dress in a hurry, and be too late for dinner—to neglect his accounts and bills, by which his family and affairs went into confusion, his despatches were neglected, and his friends at home disgusted. Having formed his taste for characters that are rarely to be met with, the same want of self-restraint led him to be openly impatient of others of a different cast, and to show them a repulsive coldness; thus he contracted an *ennui* that blasted all the promises of fortune."

July 1774. It is remarkable that this letter, which was written in July 1774, a month after Hugh's arrival at Munich, anticipates every charge which was afterwards brought against him during his residence there, by relatives at home or friends on the spot.[1]

[1] See the letters of Sir Gilbert, of Mr. Liston, Mr. Pitt, Madame de Thun, 1775-76.

Other passages in the same letter show that an idle winter in London had not been unattended with ill effects, and that his mother rejoiced over his removal from "that noxious nest," where frivolity and extravagance were the order of the day, and his brother maccaronis—"the absurd puppies of the age"—were given over to gaming and vice.

While Lady Elliot was taking advantage of the retirement of Minto to give good counsel to her son, Isabella was deploring that he was not with them, "to partake of our dancing to a bagpipe, and the charming sweet sounds of backgammon and billiards, and the magic-lantern, which are our devices this summer for passing the evening when we have company, which after a good ride in the morning, and a good dinner, prepares for a comfortable sleep at night." Kelso races were particularly brilliant that year. In those days the dwellers on the southern border seem to have frequented them as regularly as the inhabitants of the four counties (Roxburghshire, the Merse, the Forest, and Tweeddale), the Northumberlands and Delavals being as constant attendants as the Buccleuchs, Douglases, Kerrs, and Elliots.

Bob was the poet of these festive meetings, and it may be believed that some of his effusions in the

style of the New Bath Guide were not much inferior to the celebrated song of the Melrose Ball. But poor Bob was given to quaff more noxious draughts than the poet's nectar, and the allusions to him in the letters can rarely be read with satisfaction.

October 1774. Parliament was dissolved in October (1774), and, before the new one had assembled, the family left Minto, most of them for the last time, except Gilbert, whose home it was to be, and Isabella, who returned there once only, and for a very short period, on a visit to her brother; none of those who were now leaving it ever came back; nor did Hugh or Alick see it again from the time when they left it as boys. It does not appear that any of them, except, perhaps, Sir Gilbert himself, entertained any affection for the place, and the ladies certainly considered that going down there "was a great breach in society." The love of Minto, which we now guard like some hereditary spell, came in with a stranger, for Gilbert's wife was the first who is said to have "loved Minto passionately."

But the Minto of those days was not the Minto of these. The sheet of water which now reflects laburnums and rhododendrons in sight of the windows, was then a narrow burn running under banks shaggy with thorns; where the flower-garden is

now, stood a dismal little church in a corner dark with yews, and dreary with unkept graves; the manse, surrounded with a few untidy cottages, stood in the policy beyond the little glen, near enough for the minister to see the family as they sat at dinner in the round room on the ground floor, known as the "big room" by uncles and aunts, and as the "*school-room*"[1] by the children of to-day. The rocks may have been finer then, when no woods hung like drapery on their sides, but, from the old castle, one must have looked down on muirs and heaths where now lie the woods of the Lamblairs, or the green slopes and corn-fields which smile in pleasant Teviotdale.

The green hills are possibly the only feature in the place which remain unchanged, though the village which clusters at their feet is new.

In those days, roads were few, and drains were not, and the dwellers in a land where high farming triumphs, will sometimes lament the days when fences were odious and turnips undiscovered. Yet, on the whole, though sunny days may then have shown bright stretches of whin or of heather which have disappeared now, we must admit that we live on a drier soil, and in a more "innerly" country, and

[1] This is vehemently denied by our four boys, who keep to the old name.

have a greater variety of cheerful pleasures than fell to the lot of our forefathers; so peace be to their ashes! even though they did not care for Minto.

October 1774. The meeting of Parliament in October 1774, had, as I have said, assembled the family in town. Gilbert, who had taken his first fee at Durham in the preceding summer, was now steadily applying to law, and Isabella is the chief chronicler of the amusements and *on dit* of the town during the en-

Isabella to Hugh. suing season. "There are forty young Etonians in the new Parliament, and about 170 new faces. Bob, the waiter at White's, is chosen for the same place with Mr. Wedderburn, upon which Lord Suffolk said, he made no doubt they would make a very distinguished figure, being both *bred to the Bar.*"

The Opera occupies a larger space than Parlia-

Isabella to Hugh. ment in the letters of the sisters. "There is a new opera of Ranzini's composing, which is the prettiest music I ever heard, upon the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, which is very much admired. He sings and acts admirably, and all the ladies who have any feeling cry at it. I should also have been much affected if I had not unluckily sat behind Beckie Scott,[1] who *sospirid and piangered* so much,

[1] She afterwards ran away with her music-master. See Walpole's last Journals, vol. i.

and wet her handkerchief so plentifully, that I was like to die with laughing at the time Ranzini was in the agonies of death. And you must not be angry, but I assure you Lord Stormont turned quite pale, which also diverted my obdurate heart. Fop's Alley was also much moved, so you may with truth assure his friends at Munich, he, like Orpheus, can move oaks and stones with the divine powers of harmony."

Lord Stormont's unreturned passion for Lady Henrietta Stanhope,[1] is alluded to in all the preserved memoirs of the time, and very frequently in this correspondence, but if she was, as Lady Elliot describes her, "a sailing peacock, and an insufferable rigid coquette," he had no great loss.

Then, as now, all London talked for weeks of *fêtes*, which, when they came to pass, were voted "the stupidest thing imaginable." Nightly at Ranelagh, 4000 people met; 5000 tickets were issued for one night's admission to the Pantheon, to hear a woman sing, whose voice had a greater range than the harpsichord. Masquerades, private balls, and regattas, for the amusement of the two Royal Dukes, occupied the world of fashion, and "we had some very good parties ourselves," at one of

[1] Daughter of Lord Harrington, married to Mr. Foley.

Eleanor to Hugh. which, "a little private party," Franky North personated the young Lady Sutherland, just arrived from the north, and "so well, that your friend Cadogan was quite taken in, and made up to the fortune, till all of a sudden Franky gave a great Westminster halloo, to poor Cadogan's extreme confusion."

Prince Orloff, covered with diamonds, was one of the lions of the day, but so many of the great people had only just come to town, and had unpacked nothing finer than "Queen's ware,"[1] that few entertainments were given him. He was however happy to stare at the beautiful Lady Mary Somerset,[2] who was just "come out," and at the equally beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, just presented.

While the sisters, and chiefly Isabella, were writing to their brother on such topics as these, his parents found painful matter of correspondence in the condition of Hugh's affairs, which, as I have shown in my first chapter, became known to them at this time. Anxiety for his health also disturbed his mother's mind, and when to these causes of disturbance were added the flight of Hubback, a clerk, from Sir Gilbert's office, with a sum of £10,000,

[1] The New Wedgwood pottery. [2] Afterwards Duchess of Rutland.

for which he became liable, and the grave and threatening aspect of political affairs, which in Sir Gilbert's opinion made the existence of the Ministry very doubtful, it is not to be wondered at, that the letters of the parents in no wise partook of the cheerful tone of their children.

On the 20th February 1775, we find in Walpole's Journal[1] that Lord North astounded the House by a proposal of conceding to the Americans the right of taxing themselves, such taxes to be revised by the Legislature at home; this last clause, however, to be merely formal. Walpole describes the debate very graphically, and his account is confirmed in most particulars by the letters. Lady Elliot says, "Sir Gilbert's part was much applauded. . . . I fancy the measure will be abused in the long-run, according to the present spirit of the nation; and, for my own part, I am persuaded, though every means should be taken to prevent the English and Americans from destroying each other, that this is much too crude and hasty a concession not to have the appearance, on the other side of the world, of fear, and therefore will make them ten times more refractory than ever."

"The King does not like this new *piano* opera.

[1] Vol. i. p. 463.

February 1775. He, like you, has more taste for the bravura songs; but I hate them, and am glad to hear *cantabile*, for I hate hissing and cat-calls. Lord Suffolk sings loud in the chorus of the *piano* piece; his first secretary, the handsome one (Eden), has been much about Lord North of late."[1]

The successful appearance of Gilbert at the bar of the House of Lords, on an appeal case, and also before the Commons Committee of Elections, was the brightest spot on which the parents' minds could dwell at this time. Lady Elliot's account of it I have already extracted. Sir Gilbert's is not less full; and Isabella writes that her father's anxiety was greater than her brother's.

The summer of 1775 found the ladies of the family at Tunbridge Wells. From thence they wrote long and characteristic letters to their brother.

Tunbridge Wells, August 1775. "I live at home at my ease," says Lady Elliot, "with good sensible old women, with which this place abounds. Among them is Mrs. Carter, the translator of Epictetus, a being full of piety and virtue; and before I finish the subject of the society here, I must tell you that there is an old friend of yours who resides about a mile from the Wells with his mother, who makes the soul of all assemblies or

[1] This letter is partly in cipher.

companies he is with,—I mean poor Tom Erskine, the father of three children, and a fourth about to come into the world, with the glorious funds of a lieutenant's pay to support his family! Ah! let us compare and reflect on the contrasts in human life. Your fate appears to him full of felicity; yet he has that candour of mind to rejoice in what he thinks your good fortune, and to wish only he had been as fortunate. I wish you would write him a few lines to assure him of your friendship and remembrance; but they must be on the same companionable footing you were originally together, for his situation renders him proud and touchy, the natural consequence of a depressed high spirit. He has indeed a vivacity, talents, accomplishments, and knowledge, that I think will at last prevail and raise him from his obscurity and poverty. Every one who knows him becomes interested for him with a zeal that will certainly some time or other make his fortune, in spite of the cruel embarrassments he has brought himself into by his mad marriage to a frightful, long-nosed, awkward woman, who has, nevertheless, *douceur*, virtue, and amiableness to recommend her, and a love of him as strong as it is romantic. His mother has, I believe, about £400 a year, on which she maintains him and his family, besides an un-

married daughter, . . . and what shows the power of religion, they are cheerful and content, only he is forming schemes of advancement as full of humour as of impracticability."

A great portion of this letter relates to Isabella's lovers. "It has been the decree of Heaven that several have felt her power on their hearts—have writhed under it, struggled, and, by the intervention of some mysterious power, got free," a termination which did not prevent Lady Elliot from describing most amusingly the intricacies of each particular case. Eleanor, too, makes her first appearance in public life at this time, and a little romance of hers, which ended very tragically by the death of the hero, "young Delaval, the only son of the Delavals," caused some diversion to her mother's agitations respecting Isabella; but Eleanor was very young, very gay, pretty, and admired, and "a few jaunts" about the country sufficed to restore her spirits. Her own letters on the subject are very pleasing and natural.

From Tunbridge the elder members of the family went on a tour of visits, and, among other places, to Luton, Lord Bute's, and to the Norths.

Isabella Elliot, Nov. 4. 1775. "Luton is the finest and most expensive palace I ever saw," writes Isabella; "pictures and every

other refinement of taste that can be collected; but it shows plainly that these things are no way conducive to cheerfulness or happiness, as it is a kind of melancholy grandeur that is inexpressible. He himself struck me very much; he is now the gayest of the family, and amuses himself with his library and *vertù*, and seems to have in a degree forgot past times, but has a sort of horror for all the world, and we are the only visitors, except his own family, that have seen this magnificent fabric. His manners are vastly amiable—a little romantic, which, you know, is to my taste; but a disgust, which the ingratitude of the world has given him, makes him too *sauvage* to mix with it, and his family, when with him in the country, take the colour of their minds from his. I cannot but wonder at the difference, coming from the one to the other of this family, contrasted with the simplicity, jollity, good-humour, and easiness of Lord North's life and conversation; but I should think something between both would be the more happy medium, though never were there better people than the latter." She had written in May of the same year, when the bad news arrived from America, that they had been staying with the Norths. When the Minister received it, "he seemed very easy, to

our great surprise; but he is the most likeable creature I ever saw, and one must love him and all the family for their good-humour and kindness."

October brought the world to town. Parliament re-assembled, and the Queen's first drawing-room was unusually full. The news from America grew blacker by every mail; but Eleanor probably spoke the truth, when she wrote in fun, "the trial of the Duchess of Kingston fills the mind of all the inhabitants of this great metropolis; people seem much more sincerely interested in this cause than in the American War."

Eleanor to Hugh, November 1775.

The Norths seem at this time to have been the most intimate friends of the younger branches of the Elliot family. "Miss North is still the same charming amiable creature as ever," writes Eleanor. "I was at Bushy for a fortnight, where I saw Mr. Eden several times. He and Lord North took it into their heads to tell me your illness was cured by a large hump growing upon your back, higher than your head; and they talked so much about it that they frightened me out of my senses. They had a good laugh at me, because I said I would rather have it myself, or that any of my other brothers should have it, for they were not so handsome; besides that Gilbert, besides being an elder

son, might put his councillor's wig upon it, Alick might cover it with Indian gold, Bob's gown would hide it, but Hugh and a hump would never do."

No such deformity as that imagined by Lord North could have been more unnatural or grotesque than the edifice which London ladies were then erecting on their heads. "The heads in France are now higher than ever, and England follows apace. Two or three ladies have sported such a quantity of feathers, blonde, flowers, artificial cherries, plums, strawberries, grass, radishes (which is called *coiffures à la légume*), cauliflower, etc. etc., all at once upon the same head, that it has frightened and surprised the less adventurous part of the sex." Eleanor. 1775.

The year 1776 was prolific of letters, and accordingly it has a whole volume of the correspondence to itself. 1776.

The opening letters from Sir Gilbert and Lady Elliot relate to Hugh's desire to abandon the diplomatic profession in order to join the army in America as a volunteer. Both write to him in very different styles, but with equal good sense, on the subject. When, however, he had been persuaded to abandon the project, it was admitted that the chivalry of the idea, though of the De la Mancha school, had not been unappreciated by those to whom it was known.

The King had been struck with it, and from this time seems to have been especially gracious in his inquiries for the young minister.

February 1776. A letter of Lady Elliot's, of the date of February 1776, gives some curious particulars concerning the Ministry of the day :—"The King, always good and well-intentioned, must be much harassed by the embarrassed state of the public and his own servants. As far as I know, he is firm to his servants without favouritism. The Premier is a man of the best nature and humour I ever knew, and with superior talents as a speaker; I believe he is a well-intentioned, honest man, but he has no enlarged views either in men or things. He has been the dupe of little tricking jobbing knaves, the foremost of which is the new Baronet, Sir Grey Cooper, . . . who has been playing to disunite Lord North and Lord Suffolk; but thanks to the good sense, fairness, and abilities of Mr. Eden, they are, in spite of all schemes to defeat it, thoroughly united at present. That Lord Sandwich is omnipotent at the Admiralty, and Lord Barrington in the Army, is most true; it is no less true that few ministers except Lord North would submit to this; but, however, I fancy, he either must, or quit the helm, as at least the Army department seems to be one a higher

power will never relinquish. This however creates great embarrassment and confusion in business. . . . From the nature of the man who governs the fleet, and the sub-governor of the army, all [business[1]] is carried on in the most irregular, slovenly, if not mercenary manner, and their creatures employed,—witness Gage and Greaves. Things are however becoming too serious for trifling, and they are now obliged to look for men of real abilities."

In the same letter she deprecates Hugh's impatience of the society in which he lived abroad, and points out how little he had to regret in his removal from the temptations of an idle life in London.

"I will say, that if fortune had placed you in a situation to exist among these beings of dissipation and extravagance, you would soon have lost the richer gifts with which she has endowed you. . . . It is true there is now and then a genius and character amongst them that rises in spite of defects and all disadvantages of habit and education, such is Charles Fox, such is Lord Lyttleton; but what would they have been if they had applied their whole force to embellishing their great talents, and to fulfilling the noble duties of their birth! What are they now? ruined, profligate gamesters, and obliged

Feb. 5, 1776.

[1] Word illegible.

to devote themselves to party for subsistence, disregarded and distrusted."

Most of these letters, at the length of which "your father grumbles," contain passages of religious advice and reflections, and among them is a paper drawn up by Lady Elliot for the use of her youngest daughter when preparing for confirmation, which shows a cultivated and liberal mind, as well as deep religious sentiment.

When Lady Elliot was writing to her son, as she constantly did at this time, of the insufficiency of earthly pleasures, and of the transitory and fleeting nature of all earthly things, she little knew that events in her own family were about forcibly to illustrate the truths she inculcated.

In the spring of the year 1776, Alick had returned, somewhat unexpectedly, from India, with the reputation of being the "first young man there for character and abilities." At that time, or soon after, it became known to Sir Gilbert that Lord Suffolk proposed to recall Hugh from Munich in Autumn, in order that he might be sent to the far more important post of Berlin. Circumstances of various kinds prevented the family from making their annual visit to Minto at the close of the session, and summer found Lady Elliot preparing to

take possession of a house at Twickenham, with the joyful hope in her heart of shortly seeing all her children re-assembled about her again in the scenes familiar to their childhood. They had parted years ago, in their promising youth; they were about to be reunited, still young, with the promise fulfilled; each of the three elder sons had established for himself a reputation which betokened a distinguished career. Gilbert had just been returned for Morpeth, and entered Parliament with every prospect of attaining a position there. Hugh and Alick were both, in spite of their youth, high in the confidence of the Governments they served. Eleanor's approaching marriage with Mr. Eden, "whose abilities," Sir Gilbert said, "will carry him high," was a joyful event already looming at a very near distance.[1] Isabella, the one whose future was perhaps the least assured, was idolized at home and admired abroad, and entered into the successes of the others with the most cordial and unselfish affection; and, strange to say, for that one summer Bob himself, the *ne'er-do-well* of the family, showed steadiness and an inclination to work. To complete the family picture we must not omit the parents, both of whom were scarcely past the prime of life; Lady Elliot, being not much

[1] She was married in September 1776.

above forty, looked, as we are told by her daughter, "ten years younger, and very handsome;" and both she and Sir Gilbert might with reason anticipate a long possession in the future of their prosperous lot, influential in politics, popular in society, and happy at home. At this moment of their lives, at all events, they seem to have been conscious that "the lines were cast to them in pleasant places."

Lady Elliot to Hugh, 1776.

The family correspondence proves this. "What joy," writes Lady Elliot, "to have your father and *all the six* with me again! . . . We shall re-visit the old places; your old school-room still exists."

Alexander to Hugh.

Alick writes:—"I have visited the mill and the rivulet and the Thames, the spots where we first learned to love each other, and now only you are wanting to make us perfectly happy." And Hugh, writing of the anticipated meeting at Twickenham, says:—"What family can be happier than ours is now, all meeting again happy and prosperous, and loving each other as well as of old?"

The meeting took place in the month of September, and was followed by a few brief days of happiness, but even during these a speck was in the sky. Sir Gilbert had returned from his son's election, and from a hasty visit to Minto, with a neglected cold and cough; hectic symptoms rapidly appeared.

Soon after the meeting of Parliament, he found himself unable to attend the House of Commons. A change of climate was ordered by the physicians, and early in November he was on his way to Nice, with Lady Elliot and Isabella, and under the special charge of Hugh.

A letter from Gilbert, dated Lincoln's Inn, 19th November 1776, well describes the sympathy which Sir Gilbert's illness had excited among his friends.

"The warmth, and I really believe the sincerity with which almost everybody I meet receives the account of your journey and its success is affecting, particularly in the House of Commons, where he is truly missed by every man who has the least soul, and who knew the part he used to fill there. Nov. 19, 1776.

"Perhaps his absence, by withdrawing him from all those little competitions which warp vulgar, and, I am afraid, even superior minds, may have made the universal concern for his situation more sincere than was expected in that callous scene. But, whatever the reason is, it is certainly so, and to me is a subject of the most sensible and touching pleasure I now experience, and yet it makes me melancholy. To find nothing but an affectionate remembrance of one who used to be so principal when present, *there* is a change that makes one feel, and

makes one think a little of what all this is that we are busy about."

Hugh accompanied his family as far as Avignon; there he was relieved in his melancholy duties by his brother Alick, and, apparently on account of matters connected with his recent appointment to Berlin, he returned to England, after a parting so sad and painful, that Sir Gilbert is described as frequently recurring to it, saying with a sigh, "Poor, poor Hugh! how unhappy he was to leave us."

And far bitterer still that parting would have been, could a glance into the future have revealed to him, that not only of his father, but of mother and brother[1] he was taking a last farewell; and that when he should see his favourite sister again, his chosen and cheerful companion, there would be "upon her face the tint of grief, the settled shadow of an inward strife," and even he, her best and dearest, would have no power to bring relief to "that which preyed upon her mind, a spectre of the past."

[1] Alick did not return to England till after his brother's departure for Berlin, and he shortly after returned to India, where he died.

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